



A.

SERMON

Occasioned by the

DEATH

Of the late REVEREND

Mr. JOHN FOXON,

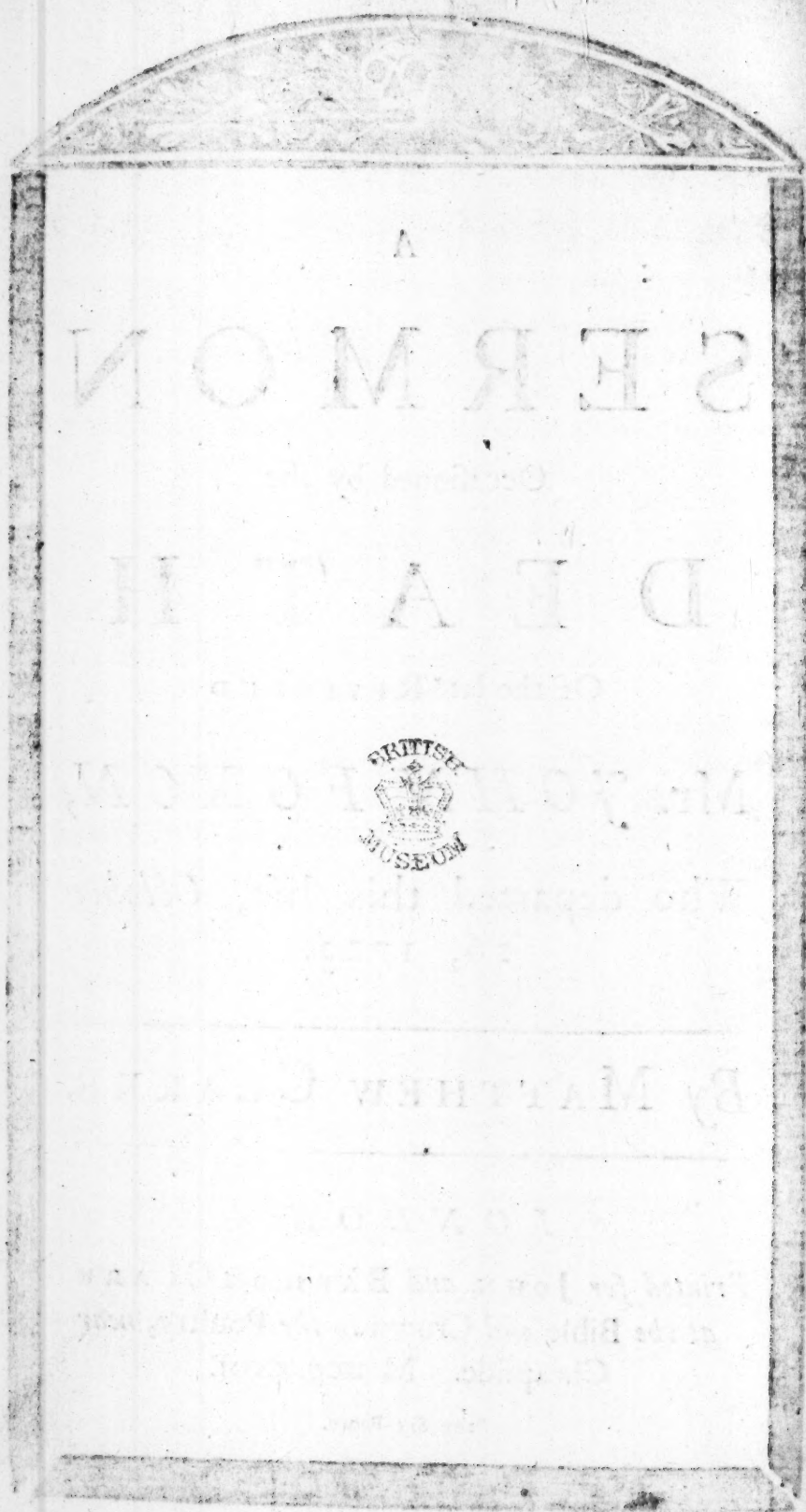
Who departed this life, *October*
26, 1723.

By MATTHEW CLARKE.

L O N D O N:

*Printed for JOHN and BARHAM CLARK,
at the Bible and Crown in the Poultry, near
Cheapside. M.DCC.XXIII.*

Price Six Pence.



A

SERMON

ON DEATH



By MATTHEW GARRARD

Printed for J. and W. B. in the Strand
at the Bible and Tracts Society's Office
in the Strand. 1794.

J O H N xix. 30.

When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, it is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.



IT is common for us, when any of our pious and christian friends are removed out of our world, to enquire how they left it: what the frame of their spirit was in some of their last moments? how they met the messengers of death? and received the summons to go up and dye? what support and comfort they had in the darksome valley from the rod and staff of a gracious God? Thus solicitous we often are to know their end. And the Psalmist gives countenance to such enquiries, when he calls upon us *to mark the perfect man, and behold the upright*; take particular notice of him, observe what comes of him, and you

shall find *the end of that man is peace.* *Balaam* himself, though a pitiful forcerer, was so well apprized of this, that who ever he ~~found~~ like, he makes it his request (though it was a vain wish, as theirs ever must be, that separate between the means and the end) *Let me dye the death of the righteous, and my last end be like his.* This is the man that hath hope in his death, and peace at his end. But we are more especially desirous to know how our deceased *ministers* went off the stage. Many eyes are upon them, to observe how they liv'd, and see how they died: it's expected they should be examples to us in both. It was therefore the request of an excellent minister in his day, that *he might not dye meanly, but so, as therein to bring much glory to God.* That he might dye comfortably, cheerfully, triumphantly, as becomes a christian and a minister. An heathen has taught us, that one part of dying well is to dye willingly, *Benè mori, est libenter mori.*

It's a blessed thing then, and comfortable, to have it said of christians and ministers they died well; and went off the stage with honour. These all died in faith. Their end was peace. They had hope in their death, and feared no evil, for God was with them

to strengthen and comfort them, in their last agonies. They acquiesc'd in his will, and went off resign'd: cheerfully left all; their country, their father's house, their own houses, their kindred, their friends and their flocks, to go unto that land which God would shew them, as what he had beforehand prepared for them.

And we are still much more concerned to know, what was the end of a far greater, and infinitely more important life: what was the issue of our Redeemer's combat with the powers of darkness. What were the inward workings and discussions of his holy soul, when giving up himself to the greatest and most hazardous encounter, that ever was, or could be engaged in. What he said, and how he acted in that great adventure. And for our satisfaction herein, the Evangelists who were so careful to transmit the history of his life to after ages, have also given us a particular account of his death. From them we learn among other things, that he spent the night before his sufferings in prayer, and conflicts, with strong cries and many tears: that for a while he seem'd at a stand, when he said, *Father, if it be possible let this cup pass*; but soon recovered himself; *nevertheless not my*

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will,

will, but thine be done; which one calls Christ's Motto.

And, when he came actually to dye, some of his last things were his prayer for his enemies, *Father, forgive them*; his promise to the converted thief, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise*: that heart-rending cry, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* and then the triumphant shout in the text, *it's finished*: after which we are also told he said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*; and having said this, he spoke no more, but *bowed his head and gave up the ghost*. Happy conclusion of an humbled life, and an accursed death! He went off the stage in triumph, and died in a way as honourable to himself, as it was comfortable to us.—

I shall sum up this account of him in the following general observation, *viz.*

That our blessed Saviour having finished all the things that concerned him here, with an holy confidence, commended himself into the Father's hands; and having thus secured his spirit, freely resigned his breath, and let go his life. This contains in it the following particulars,

I. That

I. That our Lord Jesus finished all the things that concerned him here.

II. That having so done, he commended his spirit into his father's hands.

III. That having taken this care of his spirit, he did freely let go his life. After handling each of these I shall endeavour

IV. To bring these things home to our selves, in a suitable and proper improvement. Here then we are to shew

I. That our blessed Saviour finished whatever concerned him here. He was indeed a workman that needed not to be ashamed. Never was such a work undertaken; nor ever was any work so well performed. Nothing was left undone which he covenanted to do; nothing done by halves, nor left unfinished, which he took in hand. The piercing eye of justice it self could not espy the least blemish or flaw in the whole performance. This he avouched with his last breath; and openly proclaimed before all the world, when he said, *it is finished! it's all done to a tittle!*

This is a single word in the original; but this one word contains in it the very sum and substance of all our hopes and comfort. A remarkable

markable word, and much to be taken notice of, as the words of dying men; especially their last words commonly are. These are the last words of *David*, the man rais'd upon high, says the sacred Historian, on which he puts a special remark as what were worthy to be remembered: but these are some of the last words of a greater than *David*, says the Evangelist, which we ought therefore the more carefully to attend unto. For this end, I shall endeavour

To shew what was finished; and then consider the consequences and effects thereof, which will be as so many evidences of it. First then, we are to enquire what was finished at our Lord's death. To which I answer, all that related to the great atonement; whatever God had decreed, the prophets had foretold; and the antient rites had typified concerning the death and sacrifice of Christ. Whatever God required, the surety undertook, and the sinner needed. All that was necessary to his own humiliation; his father's glory, and his peoples happiness.

All the old Testament prophecies, that pointed directly at the Messiah's sufferings, were punctually accomplished in his death.

The ceremonial institutions, the Jewish laws and sacrifices being all perfected, were finished

finished and made an end of, as of no farther use or significance in the worship of God.

The counsel and commandment of the Father, concerning the Redeemer's sufferings; the whole project and design of eternal love in our recovery was then brought to an head. This mystery is finished in the sacrifice of Christ. Here it effectually takes place and is come to an issue.

His conflict with all his enemies is now drawing to an end. It is said by the Evangelist, how much soever his enemies were enraged against him, and therefore sought to take him, that some way or other, they might put him to death; no man laid hands on him; the reason of which was this, his hour was not yet come. But in a bosom discourse between himself and his Father, where he is most open and free, he says, *Father, the hour is come*, John xvii. 1. That critical and important hour upon the issue of which so much depends. Such an hour as never came since time began. This hour is now come: the set time for my suffering. The trumpet sounds to the battle, I am now to enter the lists, not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers; with men and devils; with sin, death,

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wrath,

wrath, the curse and hell. Now is the decisive battel to be fought. The hour is come. And here in the words of the text, when giving up the ghost, he says, Father, the hour is finished. It is at an end. The battel is over, and it's well over. I have won the field, the day is my own. My enemies are routed. Sin, Satan, and death have gone their length, and done their worst, they are all overcome and conquered. Death is disarm'd and unstung; the devil subdued and destroyed. Principalities and powers spoil'd, triumph'd over and made a shew of; openly expos'd to publick contempt; and become a spectacle to Angels and men; the fight was sore, but the issue glorious and honourable. It is finished! into this triumphant word he formed his last breath. This is the voice of a conqueror, that sees the glorious issue of his combate, in the entire defeat of his enemies.

But what I could choose to fasten upon as the main sense, is,

That all the work given him to do was now finished. So he himself explains it, in those words, *Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work thou gavest me to do*, John xvii. 4. Not that the whole work of redemption was then actually completed.

completed. He was yet alive ; had the pangs of death still to go through ; he was now struggling with the powers of darkness, for the deliverance of man. He must actually be offered up for our offences ; and raised again for our justification : after which he was to ascend to the Father, and intercede with him for his people ; return in his spirit and kingdom ; manifest his gospel to the world, and, in the end, judge it. These great and important parts of his work remained still to be done.

But whereas the offering himself on the cross, was the chief work in our redemption, and in which lay his greatest humiliation ; and this was just finishing ; he had already got the better of the day, and was confident he should carry it through ; therefore he thus cried before the work was totally completed, it is finished ; it is as good as done ; and will very soon be so. All that related to the great atonement ; whatever was to be done or suffered here on earth in order to expiation, and impetration ; every thing which belonged to that great sacrifice whereby the church was to be perfected, is now accomplished. I have finished all the work thou gavest me to do. Here observe,

That Jesus Christ as mediator, was the father's servant. So the prophet calls him ; *behold my servant whom I uphold, Isa. xlii. 1.*

As a servant, it is easy and natural to suppose he must have work to do.

This work must be determined by him, whose servant he is. So much our Saviour himself tells us, when he calls that his work, *which the Father had given him to do, John xvii. 4.* The will of God is the foundation of our salvation. The will of his purpose and counsel ; the will of his command and precept. This determines his work and governs him in all he does, as he himself acknowledges in those various expressions, all of the like import. *Lo, I come to do thy will ; I delight to do thy will, O my God ; thy law is in my heart. My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.*

This work the Redeemer finished. *By one offering he hath for ever perfected all them that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14.* He hath fulfilled the law and made that honourable ; finished transgression and made an end of sin. He hath satisfied divine justice, and made reconciliation for iniquity ; brought in an everlasting righteousness, and thereby obtained all needful blessings. Whatever the law demand-

ed is paid ; whatever the sinner wanted is purchased. Every thing that justice required and the surety undertook ; whatever was necessary to our perfect state here ; and compleat happiness hereafter ; to our present acceptance with God ; and future enjoyment of him ; *it is all done and finished.*

A great word ! if we consider the nature of that work given him to do ; and yet not to be wondered at, if we consider who it was that undertook it ; who, and when it was he said it.

If we attend to the nature of the work, we shall find it to be of the greatest difficulty, and of the utmost importance. In it self, it was a work of the greatest difficulty. So great, so glorious, that it might well be ask'd, who in heaven or earth was worthy of it ; and equal to it ? is *preaching* to men, so hard a work, that the great Apostle asks concerning it, who is sufficient for these things ? what then must *redeeming* them be ? dying for them ? making an atonement for them, and giving satisfaction to God for them ? who is sufficient for these things ? God himself therefore asks with wonder and pleasure, *Jer. xxx. 21. Who is this that hath engaged his heart to approach unto me, as a surety for man ? who is he that*
has

has courage to undertake it, or strength to manage it? no man on earth, no Angel in heaven, durst attempt it, or was fit to undertake it. None of these could give to God a ransom. None of these were sufficient to satisfy offended justice; to expiate sin and guilt; to finish transgression; and make an end of sin; to fulfill the whole law; to destroy the works of the devil; to spoil and disarm sin, Satan, death, the grave and hell; to remove the fatal curse, and obtain all needful blessings. All the creatures in heaven and earth with their united strength were unable to stand under this burden, or once lift it from the earth, who indeed is sufficient for these things!

And as the work was difficult, it was painful. A work, that drew from him, not only sighs and tears, but blood. Painful work! as appears by the pains he endured in his body; the agonies he felt in his soul; his earnest request to his Father, that if possible the cup, so large, so deep, so bitter might pass.

The greatness of this word, *it is finished*, will farther appear when we consider, that this was a work of the utmost importance and necessity; of the greatest importance to the honour of God, and the happiness of his people.

To the honour of God ; particularly his truth and faithfulness, having foreordain'd and foretold it ; of his justice and holiness, which required and called for it ; of his law, that had been violated, and must be fulfilled.

And a work this was of no less importance and necessity to the happiness of mankind : for what had become of the whole race of fallen *Adam*, had not this work been undertaken and performed ? for ought appears, we must have been ruined and undone to a man. If justice had not been satisfied *for* us, it must have satisfied it self *upon* us. Had not the precepts of the law been fulfilled in his obedience, and the penalty of it answered by his sufferings, we must have died according to its righteous sentence. If he had not finished transgression, and made an end of sin, that would have made an end of us, and for ever finished all our hopes of happiness. Had not death and the devil been subdued by him, these would for ever have triumph'd over us, and carried us as their spoils to the infernal prison ; sin, in a word, had been the death of *us*, had not he been the death of *sin*.

To hear him then saying of a work so difficult in itself, so important unto us, *it is finished,*

nished, is a glorious sound, honourable to himself and no less happy for us.

But as great a word as this is, it is not to be wonder'd at, considering the person that spoke it, and the circumstances he was under when he said it. It is the voice, not of a meer man, but indeed of a God. The eternal Son of the eternal Father. A divine infinite person. The Father's fellow ; God's equal. The *subject* suffering was the human nature ; but the *person* suffering was the Son of God ; one that infinitely exceeded the quality of the offending persons, and equal'd the dignity of the person offended.

And then, as to his personal character, he was absolutely holy and harmless, separate from sinners, as it became him to be, and us to have : one that needed not like other priests, to offer first for his own sin, and then for the sins of the people ; for had he in himself been a criminal, he could not have been a Saviour. He then that offered was God : that which he offered was himself, his whole human nature ; and this without spot to God. Here's then a perfect being, upon which follows a perfect working. How was it possible, any thing could miscarry that is put into such hands ? if he condescends to unde-

take the work, we are sure to see a good issue of it. There is nothing he begins, which he is not well able to finish. What is it, such a sacrifice, offered up by such a person, is not sufficient to accomplish? do we see Jesus, the eternal Son of God; the Father's delight; the Angels wonder and admiration, not sitting on a throne, and shining in robes of majesty; but now humbling himself to death, even the death of the cross; nailed to the cursed tree; bleeding and dying there; pouring out his soul unto death, and making himself an offering for sin? it is no wonder then to hear him say *it is finished*. So marvellous a condescension must needs produce such glorious effects. Having shewed what was finished, we now come to consider,

Secondly, The consequences and effects thereof, which are so many evidences of it.

1st, Having paid the debt he is *discharged*. This naturally follows upon it. Though it was necessary he should dye, it was not possible he should be held under the power of death. And therefore he has nothing to do after this, but to rise and ascend. He is no longer in the grave; his flesh rests in hope of a joyful and speedy resurrection: *thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades*, the state of other human spi-

rits, separate from my body ; thou wilt not suffer me to continue long in the grave ; nor let thy holy one, obedient in all things, and that has fulfilled all thy will, to see corruption ; but having fully paid the debt, justice it self will sign the order for his discharge , and accordingly did so , for *the God of peace brought him again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.* This is both an effect and evidence of his having finished the work given him to do.

2^{dly}, Having done his work he is *rewarded*. This is also a natural consequence ; he is not barely discharged but advanced. Having finished his day's work, it is but just he should be paid his wages. He has won the field, let him then seize the prey, and take the spoil. It is fit he should reap the fruit of all his hard labour and sufferings ; and this he does

1. In his personal glory. This he expects and insists upon. His flesh did not only rest in hope, that he should not see corruption and soon be taken out of the grave ; but that God would shew him the path of life, and receive him up into glory. This he insists on himself in those remarkable words, *I have glorified thee on the earth, and finished the*
work

work thou gavest me to do, and now, Father, glorify me with that glory I had with thee before the world began, John xvii. 4. After he had offered one sacrifice for sin, he forever sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, henceforth expecting his foes to be his footstool, Heb. xii. 13. And according to his expectation, God raised him from the dead and gave him glory. He hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. He that had been the despising of men, and the reproach of the people, now has all power in heaven and earth put into his hands. He was no longer in the grave, and now he says, I am no longer in the world. I came forth from the Father, and having done all that was given me to do here, I go to the Father. The time of his humiliation, and the days of his abode in flesh are now at an end. He ascends into the highest heavens, to take possession of all the glory designed for him. He is also rewarded,

2. With a numerous offspring. Having made his soul an offering for sin, he is recompensed with great success in the affairs of his kingdom; and powerfully applies the fruits

of his purchase to the souls of his people. He sees of the travel of his soul, and reaps the fruit of all his hard labour, in a numerous, illustrious, hopeful shew of converts, that come flocking to him, like doves to their windows: the pleasure of the Lord prospers in his hand: he has the dew of his youth from the womb of the morning. Numerous converts like drops of the dew in a summer's morning. *This was the joy set before him, for which he endured the cross, and despised the shame, Heb. xii. 2.* This lay in his resurrection from the dead, his reception into heaven, and the salvation of his people. This will be matter of the songs and triumphs of Saints and Angels through eternal ages. At the hearing this word, *it is finished*, let the heavens and the earth resound with the loudest shouts and hallelujahs to the mighty conqueror. Salvation to our God that sits on the throne, and to the lamb in the midst of the throne. We congratulate thee on the greatness of thy undertaking; and the glory of its success. Eternal thanks we owe thee! everlasting praises we give thee. Hallelujah! I come now to the next general head.

II. Having

II. Having thus finished his work, with an holy confidence he commends his spirit into the Father's hands. This we gather from the account given us of these things by another Evangelist, who tells us, when he had cried with a loud voice, viz. *it is finished*, he said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, Luke xxiii. 46. These were the last of his dying words, in which God uttered his voice in such a manner; and after such a rate, that the earth trembled and shook. The Son of David made use of his Father David's expression, and died with Scripture words in his mouth. *Psal. xxxi. 5.* His spirit was upon the very point of separation, and instantly departing, he therefore commends it to his Father's care and keeping. Which he did

First, For himself as a dying person. And a wonderful transaction it was. Into his hands others commend their spirits, so did the Apostle Paul while living, 2 *Tim. i. 12.* So did Stephen when dying; *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* Acts vii. 59. and here he himself commends his own spirit into the Father's hands. This was an act full of faith and comfort. It shewed his faith, for he had no doubt but the

the Father would receive his spirit: take the charge and care of it, and effectually secure it. He addresses himself therefore to him under the title of Father. When he complained of his being forsaken, he cries, *Eli, Eli, my God, my God*; when he is commending his spirit, it is, *Father*. And well may a Son, and such a Son commit any concerns how dear and precious soever into the Father's hand; as he does his spirit, with a full assurance, he would both receive and return it. And in this also he took the greatest comfort. *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices*, Psal. xvi. 9, 10. His tongue breaks out into holy boasting and praises. He leaves his obedient soul as a precious treasure to his Father's custody and tuition, with a full satisfaction in what he had done, knowing he had trusted it with one that would not fail to secure it, that in a little time it should return, and be reunited to his body never to part again. In confidence of this, he commends his surviving spirit into the Father's hands, when he was just giving up the ghost.

Secondly, He did this as mediator and surety for us. Herein, as in other things, he acted as a common person and head of his Church.

Church. He now lays down his life as a ransom for his people, and makes his soul an offering for sin; he deposits and pays it down into the Father's hands, saying, Father, accept this life, this soul of mine, instead of the sinner's soul. He neither lived nor died for himself, and what he did in this act does not only refer to himself, but his people also. He now, as it were, gathers all the souls of his elect into one bundle, and together with his own, makes a solemn surrender of them to his Father, as a precious treasure to be received by him, whenever the time should come for their being loosed from their respective Bodies.

Thirdly, He did this as an Example. This tells us what we are to do when we come to dye. It is a pattern for our Imitation. This is fit work for dying saints. Let them then commit the keeping of their souls to God as a faithful Creator and merciful Redeemer. After this it follows, properly to observe, in the last place,

III. That our blessed Saviour having thus taken care of his spirit, willingly lets go his life. He *bowed his head and gave up the Ghost.*

1st, He

1st, He *bowed his head*, as a man does that is expiring. This *shewed*,
 1. The weight of his burthen. The heaviness of that load he stood under. *God laid upon him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 6. He put the sin of his people upon the head of the great sacrifice; and to shew the sense he had of this, in it self, insupportable load, he *bowed his head*, though he did not sink beneath its weight. This intimates,

2. The obedience of his soul, and his entire submission to the Father's will. He humbled himself and became obedient to death, in which he was active and voluntary. He accommodated himself to dying work, as *Jacob* gathered up his feet into the bed, and composed himself to sleep.

2^{dly}, Then he *gave up the ghost*; which signifies that last act of those who are in the agony of death, wherein there is a total, final failing of the spirits. In the original it is expressed in various terms; which are all rendred in our translation one way. He gave or yielded up the ghost. The Evangelist *Matthew* says, *he dismissed, sent out, or left his spirit*. His soul was separated from the body, which was thereby really and truly dead. *Mark* and

^a Matth. xxvii. 50. ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα, emisit, dimisit spiritum.

Luke say ^b, *he expired*; to shew he was truly
 man, his human soul departed to the world of
 spirits, and left his body a breathless clod of
 clay, *efflavit animam*, or *extremum halitum*,
 he breathed his last. The Evangelist John
 says^c, *he delivered up, surrendred his spirit*.
 All these we render, *he gave up the ghost*:
 It was said of the Sareptan widow's son,
 Kings xvii. 17. *his sickness was so sore, that*
there was no breath left in him; no soul, no
 spirit, or life in him; and when *Elijah* pray'd,
 he might be restored to life, it was in terms
 agreeable to that periphrasis of death, *O Lord,*
I pray thee, let this child's soul come into
him again: And upon God's hearing the
 Prophet's prayer, it is said, *the child's soul*
came into him again, and he revived. God
 returned his ghost, or spirit to his body again,
 ver. 21, 22. By all which we shall the better
 apprehend the meaning of this phrase, *he gave*
up the ghost. He left, or sent out his spirit.
 His soul went out of his body. He surren-
 dred or yielded it up. Having undertaken to
 make his soul an offering for sin, he actually

^a Mark xv. 37. Luke xxiii. 46. *ἐξέπνευσεν*. In the Hebrew, and
 among the Greeks and Latins, giving up the ghost, is expressed by
 one word, *נָפַח*, *ἐξέπνευσεν*, *expiravit*.

^c John xix. 30. *παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα*, *reddidit, tradidit spiritum*.

did it, when he resigned his spirit. Then he expired and breathed his last: There was now no breath left in him. This is a common expression for dying; and applied indifferently to all men, good or bad; but usually signifies an easy, gentle kind of death, in which the soul or spirit is not forcibly extorted, and by meer violence plucked away; but freely surrendered and yielded up. These dye without much reluctance; and are active as well as passive therein. This is to give up the ghost.

Should it be asked, But what is all this to us? I answer much every way, as will appear by,

IV. *Gen.* Which is the bringing this home to our selves, by a proper and suitable improvement; wherein we shall see that this eminently serves for our information, comfort, direction and counsel.

I. *Use,* It serves for our instruction, and teaches us many excellent lessons.

1st *Inf.* That Jesus of *Nazareth* is indeed the Messiah. If all the antient types and old Testament prophecies, that relate to his birth; all that these spoke of his death and sufferings, are punctually accomplished in him, as they certainly

certainly were, had we nothing else, this might serve to settle our hearts in the faith of his person and office; and abundantly satisfy us, that he is of a truth the Christ of God; the person that was to come, and we are not to look for another.

2^d *Inf.* From hence we learn the glory of the Redeemer's sacrifice. Since by one offering he hath for ever perfected all them that are sanctified. *He once offered up himself, and no more, to bear the sins of many. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.* These are glorious attestations to the sufficiency of the Redeemer's sacrifice, one offering finished all that belonged to the great atonement.

3^d *Inf.* The greatness of the Redeemer's love. This put him upon all this hard service, and carried him through it to the last. So great was his love, he never gave over working and suffering till he could say, *It is finished.* Here we see the Redeemer's kindness putting forth it self for our relief in the most astonishing manner. It so much surpasses our most exalted thoughts, we can never sufficiently admire it, much less is it possible for us suitably to requite it.

4th *Inf.* Then Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God. This one word, *it is finished*, pours everlasting contempt upon all the infidels in the world, whose blasphemous mouths are not afraid to speak reproachfully of him, and his sufferings. There is nothing in this that is weak and foolish, for men to laugh or stumble at, whatever they pretend; but a glorious display of the divine perfections. Every thing in this constitution, that is necessary to support the Father's honour, and secure his people's happiness. Therefore, whatever others do, saies the Apostle, *God forbid I should glory in any thing, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* On this he finished the work of our redemption, on this he triumphed over all his and our enemies; in this therefore will I triumph and glory. *I desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*

5th *Inf.* This tells us what we our selves must expect, and should be always preparing for. E're long it will come to our turn, to *bow the head and give up the ghost*, as many others have done before us. Oh that from hence we might learn to dye!

6th *Inf.* Whenever it does come to this, if we have been helped to finish our work, though with much weakness and many infir-

mities,

mities, we may with humble boldness, commend our spirits into the Father's hands.

7th And *lastly*, having done this, should willingly lay down our lives; and with an easy, placid mind, give up the ghost.

II. Use, This serves for our consolation, and that in every state and condition. Here is the ground of all our triumphs, and joy, in life and death. This administers comfort to us,

1. Under the fear of our spiritual enemies, lest one day we should perish by their hands. In this temptation, our Lord says, *be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*, and all the other enemies of your salvation. Fear not what they can do unto you. I fought them, and routed them; and have triumphed over them. By dying I subdued them. Fear them not, they are all conquered, and these triumphs are yours. You share my victories, and shall your selves, through him that loved you, that died, that conquered for you, be at *least more than conquerors*.

2. Under the sense of our own guilt; and the apprehensions of divine wrath due to us for sin. This one word, *it is finished*, is sufficient to answer all the objections that usually arise in the minds of humbled, broken-hearted sinners. Jesus has finished transgression, and

and made an end of sin; by his once offering up himself, he has made reconciliation for iniquity; so that God now saith, *fury is not in me*; let him take hold of my strength, and be at peace with me, and he shall make peace. He now pardons the chief of sinners, with honour to himself; fear not therefore, O distressed soul, only believe! Justice is satisfied; the grand scruple is over. Conscience need not hesitate, here is a sufficient atonement; the foundation of a solid peace. Christ can and will give rest to the souls of his people. *Come then unto me* in confidence of this, says the blessed Saviour, *all ye that are weary and heavy laden*, with guilt and wrath, and *I will give rest to your souls*. Bring all your burthens, your sorrows, cares and fears to me: rest your weary souls in your Redeemer's bosom. He that satisfied God's justice, can pacify your consciences.

3. Under the many imperfections that ever attend even our best works and services. Here in how unlike are we to Christ? All our duties are lame, defective things; and may well be complained of as what God has not found perfect, and filled up with a suitable exercise of grace, *Rev. iii. 2*. The best of our services, in respect of that exactness which the law

law requires, are but as filthy raggs. There is nothing finished or compleat that we do. Now our comfort under the sense of this is, our surety finished all the work given him to do; and how imperfect soever we are in our selves, we are compleat in him. We have a full atonement, a perfect righteousness to depend upon for our acceptance with God.

4. Under the weakness of that good work, we humbly hope, God has begun in us. This at the best is but low and feeble; our beginnings, especially, are small; besides, it meets with a powerful opposition from others: by reason of which, it seems sometimes rather to decline and go backward; and as it is subject to, and may actually fall under great decays, we are apt to fear lest at last it should one day utterly fail. It is yet unfinished and incomplete; much remains still to be done. Our graces need to be strengthened; our lusts and corruptions mortified; all which are great discouragements. But fear not. He that finished the work of redemption without us, will not fail to finish the work of sanctification within us. He that was able to do the one, is faithful and able to do the other. What he has begun, he will put the last hand to, and make it a compleat work. The

Apostle

Apostle expresses his confidence of this, *That he which had begun a good work in the Philippians, and so in any others, would perform it to the great day.*

5. Under a sense of our own incapacity to finish the work God has given us to do. He that finished his own work, can enable us to finish ours. Through Christ strengthening us, we can do all things. Through his power and assistance, we shall be more than conquerors, and able to say, *we have fought the good fight, and finished our course*, as the Apostle did; though not with equal glory, yet with no less certainty. E're long the feeblest Saint, shall triumph; and with joyfull transport, say, *it is finished*; my course, my conflict; my struggle with sin, Satan, and the world, it is all over and at an end.

7. This may be a great relief to us under the death of our christian friends and relations, especially of our faithful ministers. Another of these is lately taken from us: we have had sickness upon sickness, death upon death, and now sorrow upon sorrow. The Apostle owns, if *Epaphroditus* had been sic-
unto death, as he was *nigh* unto it, he and others, would have had sorrow upon sorrow: he had sorrow in his heart, upon our

account or another before; and the death of
 such a faithful servant would have given him
 a fresh wound. Now this is our case, here is
 another minister sick unto death. God repeats
 his strokes, and renews our grief. How ma-
 ny sore breaches in less than one year has he
 made upon us in city and country? hereby he
 multiplies sorrows in families and churches.
 Breaks us, with breach upon breach. Two
 removed in one day; Lord! wilt thou make
 a full end? We can't but sorrow, that several of
 them were taken off in the prime of their
 days, and their work should be so soon at an
 end. Here is another called out of the vine-
 yard, before the sun of life was arrived at its
 full meridian.— This is our sorrow, he now
 labours no more amongst us; will never preach
 to us more; never pray *with us*, nor *for us*
 more. Never instruct and catechise us again.
 We shall never see his face, nor hear his voice
 more. He has preached, prayed, and breathed
 his last. Oh! the sorrow with which this fills
 many a heart. But remember, my friends,
 his servants have finished all that work God sent
 them to do. If they are call'd home, it is
 because their master had nothing more for
 them to do here. God has made what use of
 them he intended; and if they have finished

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their ministry, why should you desire their longer stay? This was entirely the sense of my dear Brother, whose death we now bewail, and would endeavour to improve; as he told me himself upon his sick and dying bed, making use of *David's* words. *If the Lord have any pleasure in me, any more work for me, he will bring me back from this sick bed; but if not, and the Lord say he has no farther occasion for, nor need of my poor service, here I am, let the Lord do with me what seems good in his sight.* He willingly left this world, wife, children, his friends, his flock, though dear to him. Having finished his work, *he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* Then be dumb, and open not your mouths, God has done it. He calls off his servants at pleasure, and can raise up others in their room. Though that's a hard thing; it is not too hard for the Lord. We indeed are at a loss to think how it should be done, and where hands will be found; but the residue of the spirit is with the Lord; who is able to raise up others, make use of them, and bless them. Where he has a work to do, he will never want proper hands to do it.

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And besides, remember for your comfort, if their work be done, their labours also are ceas'd. The storm is over, their sorrows and troubles, their agonies and conflicts, their pains and complaints are all at an end. These are finished. They are now no more in the world. A world of sin, sorrow, and temptations. But gone to the Father, and join'd to the company of pure and perfect spirits, where they see God, and serve him night and day in his temple, having all tears wiped from their eyes. Such consolation does this administer.

And what now should trouble the soul? nothing would, could we rest satisfied in this infinite merit, as the justice of God it self has done. Oh! then that we had a faith suitable to the height of these mysteries. That we could behold this salvation of God in our serious thoughts, and eccho to the Redeemer's shout, *it is finished*. This we glory, this we triumph in. Who is he? what is that which shall condemn? there is now no condemnation. There are none to hurt in all his holy mountain. The sucking child may play on the hole of the asp; and the weaned child put his hand to the cockatrice's den. *Oh death! where is thy sting? oh grave! where*

is thy victory? Hear then this triumphant shout; let the sound go through the earth, and be heard around the globe. Hear this, all you that have not believed, that you may be brought to believe on the Son of God, dying and conquering. Hear this, all you that have believed, that your faith may gather new life, to your more abundant joy and comfort. There is nothing now to be feared but unbelief, which flurs the whole design, as faith gives to Christ the glory of this great performance. *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* But this brings us to the last

III. Use, which is for our direction. Let us then conform to this great example; *go and do likewise.* Christ has set us a pattern, that we may follow him both in life and death.

1. In life, that we may be able to say, when we come to dye, our work is finished. See then

That this work is *begun.* Think not because Christ finished the work of our redemption on the cross, that there remains nothing for us to do. We are not indeed called to the same work, this is not laid upon us; but every man has a work given him to do in this world. There is the great work of faith and
repentance

repentance to be begun and accomplished in us by the special grace of God. We are commanded to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Our Lord work'd hard, and shall we stand idle all the day?

And as we are called to begin our work, so from the example of our Lord to begin it betimes. *Wist ye not*, says he to his parents at twelve years old, *I must be about my Father's business?* a blessed pattern to children and young people. Let me then bespeak young ones herein. He that is gone, often did so; and being dead, thereby yet speaks. Could that mouth which is now shut be opened again, it would be in some such language as this. Oh don't trifle away the best part of your time. Let not God be put off with the bran, whilst Satan has the flower of your lives. Get up betimes in the morning, if you intend to make a good day's work on't. Be up and doing. Take the morning of your day for your Father's business, and the work of your own salvation.

He that is now taken from you, was himself an example to you herein. Being placed by his parents in religious families, where he was carefully instructed in those things that were necessary to be known in order to his being

being a christian, as well as what might fit him for the ministry, he had serious impressions upon his mind in his early years ; and might be said, like *Obadiab*, *to fear the Lord from his youth* ; and did betimes devote himself to God, and give up himself to his church. This was both his honour and his comfort, and will be yours, if you are helped to go and do likewise.

And having begun this work, see that it *be carried on*. Herein also, our blessed Lord has left us an example. He went about continually doing good. It was his meat to do the Father's will. His was a life of action. Fill'd up with service and obedience. Let not us then faint in our minds, and be weary in well doing. Be not slothful in business, in your Father's business ; in the business of your souls, and of another world ; but fervent in spirit. Ply the oar, lest a contrary wind and stream drive you back. Give all diligence to increase your grace, and make sure your calling. A man may go idle to hell ; but he that would get to heaven must be busy : work, and work hard. Upon this account it is the righteous are said *scarcely to be saved* ; not without much difficulty and great pains. See then your path be like that of the just, which shines more and more

more to the perfect day, and your goodness not like the morning cloud and early dew that soon passes away.

And then take care to *finish* your work. Begin betimes; follow it close; and never leave till you can say it is finished. Thus did our blessed Lord, whose example should quicken us to constancy and perseverance. For no man can ever leave the world with comfort, that has not finished his work with care. Nor with confidence at last commend his spirit to God, or with any patience give up the ghost, that never once begun, nor ever minded the great work of his salvation, but spent his whole time in vain pursuits, sensual delights and pleasures, and sinful practices; that lived in ease and pomp, luxury and riot, forgetful of God, and altogether heedless of an immortal soul. Oh that we were wise, and did understand this, and would consider our latter end.

Though the best have nothing to boast of, and having done all must acknowledge themselves unprofitable servants; yet it will be matter of rejoicing to think, when our lives are at an end, our work has not been neglected, but we have been, through the grace of God, steadfast and unmovable, abounding in the work of
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the Lord. This was the care of our friend and brother ; and we have reason to believe he now reaps the comfort of it. He had been himself a partaker of the grace of God. Was a great admirer, and a faithful preacher of it. There ran his strain : thither went his spirit. Jesus ! the lovely Jesus was his delightful theme. His talent lay in the pulpit, where he was eminently own'd and bless'd. His gifts being admirably fitted to awaken sinners and comfort saints. He was a painful, affectionate, rousing preacher : so far from doing the work of the Lord negligently, that he rather too much exhausted his spirits. But it was a good work, and therein he was willing to spend and be spent. The words of life were not suffered to dye on his lips ; nor did he so coldly declare the counsel of God, as either to make or leave his hearers cold.

He greatly long'd after the salvation of souls, and especially discovered a concern for the rising generation, and above all for the children of the covenant. I have often observed, and I don't doubt but others have done it, how his desires after their welfare were drawn out in prayer. For these his cries went up continually to heaven. And of great use God made him to *them*, more especially both in preaching

ing and catechising. Many seals among these God gave to his ministry; that we trust will be his crown and rejoicing.

2. In death also let us be conformed to our Saviour's example. Imitate him in the manner of dying. From hence let us learn

To commend our spirits into the Father's hands. So did our Lord, whose action herein tells us, that the great work of dying persons is to commit their surviving spirits into the hands of God. They are warranted and encouraged to do it by this example. This is what ought, and is supposed to be done *before*, else instead of *committing* our souls into the hands, they only, which is a fearful thing, *fall* into the hands of God. How dreadful to think in a dying hour, the Lord never yet received this soul of mine! and if I attempt now to commit it into his hands, he may justly say, it is none of thine to dispose of; thou hast given it away already; sold it to sin, and Satan; to work wickedness; pledg'd it in another hand; it is therefore none of mine, I never knew it, nor will I receive it. Oh! therefore now let us make this surrender, that we may, with the greater assurance, commit it to his care and keeping in a dying hour, being able to say, Lord, it is a soul thou hast re-

deemed, justified, and sanctified; it is a spirit that has already been given to thee, a devoted soul before. I now put into thy hands, and only offer thee what is thine already. I do but repeat in my last moments, what I often did in my life-time; now, Lord, take this spirit under thy care and tutelage, defend it from danger, and carry it safe to thy heavenly kingdom.

Having so done then, in conformity to Christ, let us chearfully resign our lives, and give up the ghost. So did our blessed Lord. Now he says, I am no more in the world; having done all I was called to do in it. I have no more sermons to preach, no more miracles to work; no other offering to make, nor any more sufferings to endure; now I go to the Father. Herein he has taught us how to dye, saying, now I leave the world and all things in it, and go to the Father, which is much better by far. I dwell no more in *Meshech*, at a distance from the divine glory; nor sojourn in the tents of *Kedar*, a land of darkness and sorrow. We enter into the shadow of death, but it is to pass into the kingdom of light, the glorious palace of the great King our heavenly Father. Thus in some good measure died our friend and brother, who being ask'd
when

when near expiring, and ready to give up the
 ghost, if he had God's presence with him, an-
 swer'd with some of his last breath, *thro' grace,*
thro' grace, he had.

And have the souls of our departed friends
 and relations been thus commended into the
 Father's hands, let us be the more patient and
 quiet under such an afflicting dispensation,
 since if taken out of our arms, they are now in
 the Father's bosom, and, in effect, say, weep
 not for us, but for your selves.

This must be a great satisfaction to his fa-
 mily; they are the widow and the fatherless
 one that did solemnly commit them in-
 to the same hands where he left himself, to be
 taken care of, and provided for by him. The
 Lord himself help the widow to trust in him,
 and be the father of the fatherless. The flock
 bereaved of their shepherd, must by this be
 comforted in their heavy loss. May they re-
 member the words he hath spoken to them in
 the name of the Lord. *See the rod, and who*
hath appointed it. Be preserved together as a
 compacted body, and be directed to, and as
 one, agree in a person, to go in and out before
 them, under whose ministry they may find
 good pasture.

But

But remember, as a conclusion, how much pleasure soever we take in the happy end, that our friends and relations, or ministers make all our comforts do arise from the life and death of our blessed Saviour, who left the world with this triumphant shout, *it is finished.*

To him be glory for ever. Amen.

F I N I S.



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